

The Stroke Ruff Drum Rudiment: A Comprehensive Examination

The stroke ruff is a fundamental drum rudiment that serves as a cornerstone of rudimental drumming and finds widespread application in various musical genres. This detailed article aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the stroke ruff, covering its history, proper technique, benefits, and practical applications. Additionally, we will explore its variations, offering valuable insights for drummers of all levels seeking to enhance their technical proficiency.



The 4 Stroke Ruff Drum Rudiment : The 4 Stroke Ruff Around the Drum Set (Drum Rudiments) by D. Mark Agostinelli

★★★★★ 5 out of 5
Language : English
File size : 27541 KB
Print length : 114 pages
Lending : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported



History and Origins

The stroke ruff rudiment traces its roots to the military drumming of the 18th century. Drummers in military bands were tasked with conveying commands and signals on the battlefield, and the stroke ruff emerged as an effective means of creating a distinct and audible sound. Over time, the rudiment gained popularity in marching bands and drum corps, becoming an indispensable element of rudimental drumming.

Technique

Executing the stroke ruff requires a precise and coordinated hand motion. The rudiment consists of a single stroke with the right hand, followed by a rapid double stroke with the left hand. The right-hand stroke is played on the snare drum, while the left-hand strokes are played in quick succession on the hi-hat or cymbal.

To perform the stroke ruff correctly, begin by holding the drumsticks in a traditional grip. Position your right hand over the snare drum with the stick resting lightly on the drumhead. Bring your left hand to the hi-hat, ensuring that the stick is parallel to the cymbal.

Start by playing a single stroke with your right hand. Immediately after the right-hand stroke, execute two quick strokes with your left hand on the hi-hat. The double strokes should be played in close succession, creating a distinct ruff sound.

Benefits of Practicing the Stroke Ruff

Incorporating the stroke ruff into your drumming practice offers numerous benefits:

- **Enhanced Dexterity:** The stroke ruff requires precise hand coordination, which can improve the dexterity and agility of both hands.
- **Improved Speed:** The rapid double strokes involved in the stroke ruff help develop speed and control in your left hand.
- **Rhythmic Accuracy:** Practicing the stroke ruff helps develop a strong sense of rhythm and timing.

- **Musical Versatility:** The stroke ruff finds application in a wide range of musical styles, from rudimental drumming to jazz and rock.

Practical Applications

The stroke ruff is a versatile rudiment that can be used in various musical contexts:

- **Rudimental Drumming:** The stroke ruff is an essential rudiment in rudimental drumming and is often featured in drum solos and exercises.
- **Marching Bands:** The stroke ruff is a common embellishment in marching band drumming, adding a distinct and rhythmic flair to performances.
- **Drum Corps:** Drum corps incorporate the stroke ruff into their complex and visually stunning routines, showcasing the technical proficiency of their drummers.
- **Jazz and Rock:** The stroke ruff can add rhythmic interest and complexity to jazz and rock drum parts, creating a driving and energetic groove.

Variations

Beyond the standard stroke ruff, there are several variations that offer unique rhythmic possibilities:

- **Double Stroke Ruff:** Involves playing two double strokes with the left hand instead of one, creating a more pronounced ruff sound.

- **Triple Stroke Ruff:** Similar to the double stroke ruff, but with three double strokes instead of two.
- **Inverted Stroke Ruff:** Played with an inverted paradiddle (RLRR instead of LRLR), resulting in a different rhythmic pattern.
- **Flam Ruff:** Incorporates flam accents into the stroke ruff, adding a more complex and textured sound.

The stroke ruff is a foundational drum rudiment that offers a wealth of benefits for drummers of all levels. Its historical significance, technical challenges, and practical applications make it an indispensable part of any drummer's toolkit. Embracing the stroke ruff and its variations can enhance your drumming skills, expand your rhythmic vocabulary, and add a dynamic and expressive element to your performances.

Whether you are a beginner drummer seeking to build a solid foundation or an experienced player looking to refine your technique, incorporating the stroke ruff into your practice routine will undoubtedly yield positive results. So pick up your drumsticks, embrace the challenge, and embark on a journey of rhythmic exploration with the stroke ruff drum rudiment.



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